

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 05811 120750Z
ACTION EUR-12

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AMCONSUL ADANA
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USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON
CINCUSAFE RAMTEIN GE
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES
USDOCOLANDSOUTHEAST IZMIR
USMISSION USNATO
USNMR SHAPE
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 5811

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: MPOL, PINT, TU
SUBJ: TURKISH MILITARY ANNUAL PROMOTION CYCLE: NO POLITICS
EVIDENT.

REF: DAO ANKARA IR 6898050478 (DTG 081133Z AUG 78) (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: THE AUGUST 5 PROMOTION LIST FOR SENIOR TURKISH
MILITARY OFFICERS WAS ANNOUNCED TO THE PRESS AUGUST 6. WE
HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO FIND ANY PATTERN IN THE LIST THAT WOULD
INDICATE A POLITICAL BASIS FOR THE CHOICES. IN MARKED CONTRAST
TO HIS PREDECESSOR, PRIMIN ECEVIT CONTINUES TO GIVE THE
IMPRESSION THAT HE IS ATTEMPTING TO AVOID ANY HINT OF POLITICAL
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PAGE 02 ANKARA 05811 120750Z

MANIPULATION OF MILITARY PROMOTIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS. THE
NEXT STEP IN THE AUGUST CYCLE WILL BE THE AUGUST 31
ASSIGNMENTS LIST. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL CONCLUDED ITS DELIBERATIONS
ON THE PROMOTION LIST AUGUST 5 AND, FOR THE FIRST TIME, MADE
ITS DECISIONS BY SECRET BALLOT. THE DECISIONS OF THE GROUP

WERE THEN RELEASED TO THE PRESS FOR PUBLICATION AUGUST 6. OF THE ARMY'S 10 CURRENT 4-STAR GENERALS, NONE WERE FACED WITH MANDATORY RETIREMENT THIS YEAR. HOWEVER, TWO NEW FOUR-STAR SLOTS WERE CREATED ALLOWING TWO PROMOTIONS TO FULL GENERAL. THOSE SELECTED WERE HAYDAR SALTİK, THE CURRENT COMMANDER OF TURKISH FORCES ON CYPRUS, AND BEDRETTİN DEMİREL, CURRENTLY A CORPS COMMANDER IN THE FIRST ARMY.

3. WITH THE RESULTS OF THE PROMOTION BOARDS KNOWN, ATTENTION HAS NOW SHIFED TO THE AUGUST 31 COMMAND CHANGES. THERE HAVE ALREADY BEEN SOME PRESS REPORTS, CONFIRMED BY NUMEROUS CONTACTS IN THE TURKISH MILITARY, THAT THERE WILL BE FEW CHANGES IN THE MOST SENIOR MILITARY SLOTS. ALL FOUR OF THE ARMY COMMANDS WERE FILLED ONLY WITHIN THE LAST 11 MONTHS AND THE NAVY CHIEF OF STAFF, ADMIRAL ULUSU, IS EXPECTED TO BE AUTOMATICALLY EXTENDED SINCE HE HAS NOT SERVED IN THAT POSITION FOR A YEAR. THE ONLY EXCEPTION IS THE LIKELY RETIREMENT OF THE AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF, GENERAL AYAN. THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL PRESS REPORTS, CONFIRMED BY TURKISH MILITARY CONTACTS, THAT AYAN WILL NOT BE REAPPOINTED FOR ANOTHER YEAR IN ORDER TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE POLITICALLY EXPERIENCED GENERAL SAHINKAYA (CURRENTLY DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL. SPECULATION ON OTHER FOR-STAR ASSIGNMENTS WHICH HAVE WIDE CURRECNY IN MILITARY CIRCLES IS: THE ASSIGNMENT OF DEMİREL TO THE CURRENTLY VACANT POST OF COMMANDER, COMBINED WAR COLLEGES, THE REPLACEMENT
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PAGE 03 ANKARA 05811 120750Z

OF CELASUN, DEPUTY CHIEF OF TURKISH GENERAL STAFF, BY THE NEWLY PROMOTED GENERAL SALTİK AND THE ASSIGNMENT OF CELASUN AS COMMANDER OF THE JANDARMA.

4. COMMENT: WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO FIND ANY PATTERN IN THE PROMOTION/RETIREMENT LIST THAT WOULD INDICATE A POLITICAL BASIS FOR THE ACTIONS. THIS IS NOTWITHSTANDING THE FACT THAT ONE RECENT DAO REPORT (REFTEL INDICATED THAT ECEVİT WOULD ATTEMPT TO RELEGATE "RIGHTIST" GENERAL OFFICERS TO THE FRINGES OF TURKISH MILITARY ACTIVITY. THE ABSENCE OF OBSERVABLE POLITICAL CONTENT IN THIS YEAR'S PROMOTION CYCLE IS IN MARKED CONTRAST TO THE AIR OF POLITICAL CRISIS THAT SURROUNDED LAST YEAR'S CYCLE. IN AUGUST 1977, PRİMİN DEMİREL'S EFFORTS TO INFLUENCE SENIOR MILITARY PROMOTIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS WAS SO BLATANT THAT A SERIOUS CIVILIAN/MILITARY CONFRONTATION SEEMED IMMINENT. PRESS REPORTS LAST YEAR DREW PARALLELS BETWEEN THE THEN ONGOING DEBATE AND THE INTENSE PUBLIC CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE COMMAND APPOINTMENTS SUBSEQUENT TO THE 1960 MILITARY INTERVENTION. THIS YEAR, OTHER THAN FACTUALLY REPORTING THE PROMOTION LIST, THERE WAS NO ADDITIONAL EXPOSITION IN THE TURKISH PRESS NOR EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THE STATE OF CIVILIAN MILITARY RELATIONS. SIMILARLY, THERE HAS BEEN NO REPETITION OF THE

LAST YEAR'S CONSTANT PROCLAMATIONS BY TGS OF TURKISH MILITARY
FIDELITY TO CIVILIAN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT. IN SHORT, UNLIKE
HIS PREDECESSOR, PRIMIN ECEVIT CONTINUES TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION
THAT HE IS ATTEMPTING TO AVOID ANY HINT OF POLITICAL MANIPULATION
OF THE MILITARY; RECIPROCALLY, THE MILITARY HAS EVIDENCED NO
INTEREST IN BECOMING ENGAGED IN CIVILIAN POLITICS. DILLON

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